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ABSTRACT

After defining numerous terms related to physical and mental child abuse and neglect and presenting information on the prevalence and causes of abuse, this document explains areas of immediate concern for schools: (1) identification; (2) communicating with the student about possible abuse; (3) reporting suspected abuse; (4) assisting the abused child in the school environment; (5) agency response to reports of suspected abuse; and (6) limitations involved in emotional abuse prosecution. A section on school prevention efforts that discusses staff training, student training, and community awareness is followed by a discussion of policy and procedure development that includes relevant questions to be addressed; information on encouraging collaboration with the state Children's Services and law enforcement agencies; and sample policies, procedures, and statements. Last, information on 11 community agencies in Linn and Benton Counties, Oregon, is provided as a model for other districts to follow in collaborating with social service agencies in their own communities. Appended is an ERIC Digest on the role of schools in sexual abuse prevention and intervention. (27 references) (CLA)

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A Handbook for

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Social Services

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Volume 3: Child Abuse

Linn-Benton Education Service District
and
ERIC
Clearinghouse on Educational Management

EA 022 889

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Volume 3: Child Abuse

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The ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, one of several such units in the system, was established at the University of Oregon in 1966. The Clearinghouse and its companion units process research reports and journal articles for announcement in ERIC's index and abstract bulletins.

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At-Risk Youth in Crisis: A Handbook for Collaboration Between Schools and Social Services

Volumes planned for this series are listed below:

Volume 1: Introduction and Resources (February (1991)
Volume 2: Suicide (March 1991)
Volume 3: Child Abuse (May 1991)
Volume 4: Substance Abuse (June 1991)
Volume 5: Attendance Services (1992)
Volume 6: Teen Parenting (1992)

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FOREWORD

Children who are at risk of dropping out of school or at risk of emotional, psychological, or physical injury have a tremendous impact on the economic, social, and political well being of our communities. Educators and human service providers alike are currently being asked to provide a broader range of services to an increasing population of troubled children—often with a simultaneous decrease in available human and fiscal resources. Today's challenges require a comprehensive community response to a community need. Consequently, the need for community collaboration in providing an effective response has become overwhelmingly apparent.

The Linn-Benton Education Service District and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management are pleased to make this *At-Risk Youth in Crisis* Handbook Series available to school districts across the nation that want to respond to the need for collaboration in their own communities.

A local tragedy involving a youth suicide became the impetus for Linn-Benton Education Service District's leadership in spearheading a collaborative effort with local schools and community agencies to develop a handbook detailing acceptable, proven guidelines for appropriate interventions. The handbook contained clear procedures for schools and agencies to follow in relation to crisis situations occurring in schools. Decisions involving crisis situations necessitate shared responsibilities among school staff and human service providers in order to provide the most appropriate and effective response to all parties of interest.

In its original form, the document was titled *A Principal's Handbook: Serving At-Risk Students in Crisis.* The handbook, developed specifically for all the schools in Linn and Benton Counties, Oregon, was contained in a three-ring binder with four initial sections: Suicide, Child Abuse, Substance Abuse, and Community Resources. With the active support of Circuit Court Judges William O. Lewis and Frank O. Knight, all the major human service agencies in the two-county area participated in the development and implementation of the handbook. At the same time, six Youth Service Teams were formed in key areas, whereby two interagency county units were activated.

Benefits of this collaborative effort have included a clear delineation of school/agency responsibilities, realistic guidelines, improved relationships between

schools and agencies, an increase in additional collaborative efforts, and, most importantly, a sense of community responsibility. And, of course, the child ultimately becomes the big winner.

Recognizing the success of this effort in Linn and Benton Counties, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management devised a plan to make the Handbook available to a national audience. First, the Clearinghouse asked the coordinators of the Linn-Benton project to write the overview of the program that is contained in Volume 1. This description covers why and how the Handbook was developed and advises other school districts on forging similar collaborative endeavors in their own communities.

Second, the Clearinghouse assembled the resource materials contained in the second section of this volume. These materials include two *ERIC Digests* and resumes of journal articles and research reports, books, and papers in the ERIC database on collaboration between schools and social service agencies.

Subsequent volumes in the *At-Risk Youth in Crisis* Handbook Series deal with specific crisis issues: Suicide (Volume 2), Child Abuse (Volume 3), and Substance Abuse (Volume 4). All these volumes will be in print by the end of 1991. Volumes currently being written on Attendance Services and Teen Parenting will be published in 1992.

We wholeheartedly support this important work and encourage other education and community agencies to engage in the valuable process of collaboration.

Gerald J. Bennett
Superintendent
Linn-Benton Education Service District

Philip K. Piele
Professor and Director
ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management

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PHYSICAL AND BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Type of Abuse	Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
PHYSICAL ABUSE	*Unexplained Bruises and Welts* • on face, lips, mouth • on torso, back, buttocks, thighs • in various stages of healing • clustered, forming regular patterns • reflecting shape of article used to inflict (electric cord, belt buckle) • on several different surface areas • regularly appear after absence, weekend, or vacation *Unexplained Burns* • cigar, cigarette burns, expecially on buttocks • immersion burns (sock-like, glove-like, doughnut shaped on buttocks or genitalia) • patterned like electric burner, iron, etc. • rope burns on arms, legs, neck, or torso *Unexplained Fractures* • to skull, nose, facial structure • in various stages of healing • multiple or spiral fractures *Unexplained Lacerations or Abrasions* • to mouth, lips, gums, eyes • to external genitalia	*Wary* of adult contacts Consistently on the *alert* for danger *Apprehensive* when other children cry *Behavioral extremes:* • aggressiveness, or • withdrawal *Frightened* of parents *Afraid* to go home *Reports* injury by parents
PHYSICAL NEGLECT	Consistent *hunger, poor hygiene,* inappropriate dress Consistent *lack of supervision,* especially in dangerous activities or long periods of time. Unattended *physical/emotional problems* or medical needs. Abandonment	Seems *depressed,* passive *Begging, Stealing* food *Extended stays* at school (early arrival/late departure) Constant *fatigue,* listlessness or falling asleep in class Alcohol or *drug abuse* *Delinquency* (e.g., thefts) or destruction of toys and teaching materials States there is *no caretaker* *Shunned* by peers When hurt, *doesn't cry*

KEY POINTS ABOUT CHILD ABUSE

Type of Abuse	Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION	*Difficulty* in walking or sitting Torn, stained, or bloody *underclothing* *Pain* or *itching* in genital area *Bruises* or *bleeding* or *infection* of external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas *Venereal Disease,* especially in preteens *Pregnancy*	*Unwilling* to change for gym or participate in physical education class *Withdrawn,* fantasy or infantile behavior Bizarre, sophisticated, or *unusual sexual behavior* or knowledge *Poor peer relationships* *Delinquent* or runaway *Reports* sexual assault by caretaker *Fear* of a person or an *intense dislike* at being left with someone *Unusual interests* in or knowledge of sexual matters, expressing *affection* in ways *inappropriate* for a child that age Exhibits behavioral indicators of emotional abuse
MENTAL INJURY OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE	*Speech* disorders Lags in physical *development* *Failure to thrive*	*Habit* disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, etc) *Conduct* disorders (antisocial, destructive, etc) *Neurotic* traits (sleep disorder, inhibition of play) *Psychoneurotic* reactions (hysteria, obsession, compulsion, phobias, hypochondria) *Behavior extreme* • complaint, passive • aggressive, demanding *Overly Adaptive* Behavior • inappropriately adult • inappropriately infant *Developmental* lags (mental, emotional) Attempted *suicide*

PERSONS REQUIRED TO REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE IN OREGON

(It varies from state to state)

Physician, including any intern or resident

Dentist

School employee

Licensed practical nurse or registered nurse

Employee of the Department of Human Resources, county health department, community mental health program, a county juvenile department, or a licensed child-care agency

Peace officer

Psychologist

Clergyman

Social worker

Optometrist

Chiropractor

Certified provider of day care, foster care, or an employee thereof

Attorney

Naturopathic physician

SAMPLE REPORT FORM
CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIVISION/LAW ENFORCEMENT

Reporter's Name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

This Report Concerns the Following Child(ren)

Name	Age/DOB	Sex	School

OTHER FAMILY MEMBER(S) Parents, custodians, or adults living in home; other children in family

Name	Relationship	Age	Address	Phone

Address of Child(ren): _____
Street City State Zip

_____
Phone Number

Address of Parent/Guardian: _____
(if different) Street City State Zip

_____
Phone Number

OTHER SIGNIFICANT PERSON(S) WHO MAY HAVE INFORMATION: School counselor, teachers, doctor, relative, friends, neighbors, etc.

Name	Address	Phone	Relationship

SUMMARIZE THE NATURE OF THE CONCERN/REPORT:

List most important details first, and *be specific.*

Brief description of injury/conditions/reasons for concern:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Is there a documented history of reports regarding this student? ___ yes ___ no ____ unknown

Person Making Report: _____

Oral Report Made to Principal/designee: Date: _____ Time: _____

Oral Report Made to Agency: _____

Person Contacted: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Written Report Sent to Agency: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Action Taken: _____ No change _____ Taken into custody of police/CSD

(on date of report) _____ Other: _____

Copies to: agency receiving the oral report.

district report file: _____

building report file: _____

(NOT TO BE PLACED IN THE CHILD'S PERSONAL FILE.)

ITEMS TO CONSIDER IN POLICY AND PROCEDURE DEVELOPMENT

KEY POINTS

Statement of district/building's concern for abused children and their families.

Reporting requirements that adhere to state law.

Mandated inservice training for all staff on how to recognize and subsequently report suspected child abuse.

Encouraged cooperation and collaboration with Children's Services Division and local law enforcement agencies.

Promotion of primary prevention programs.

INTRODUCTION

This volume of the *At-Risk Youth in Crisis* Handbook is designed to provide information to school personnel on how to prevent child abuse, assist the victims of child abuse in the school setting, and complement treatment provided to the victims and their parents by other agencies.

Immediate crisis intervention processes, long-term prevention guidelines, policy considerations, and available community resources are discussed in detail.

As over 50 percent of child abuse cases involve school age children, *educators play a key role in the identification, reporting, and treatment of abused children.* In addition to the responsibility for the intellectual development of children, educators have the expanded responsibility of safeguarding children's general health and welfare.

Educator involvement in the struggle against child abuse is precipitated by many factors involving legal mandates, professional and ethical responsibilities, and personal commitments to children. Federal and state laws mandate involvement of educators in child abuse detection.

Research indicates that abused children frequently demonstrate significant learning problems and function below their ability level. With the focus on teaching, educators have both a professional and an ethical responsibility to intervene when abuse is suspected.

Personal commitment to working with and for children is perhaps the most compelling reason for educator involvement in abuse prevention.

Child abuse is part of the day-to-day reality of working with children. Abused children may be found in any classroom in any community. The school setting offers a unique opportunity for professionally trained educators to observe children daily over periods of time, and to identify those in need of protection and services.

Educators also have the benefit of comparing behaviors which are unusual for a particular child with those that are typical. It is frequently the case that a teacher will become aware that something is wrong with a child long before severe physical injury is evident.

While schools play a crucial role, prevention of child abuse is clearly a *responsibility to be shared among community citizens, the schools, and community agencies charged with child protection functions.*

Collaboration and coordination among these responsible parties is essential. Each party's ability to fulfill its legal and ethical responsibilities is contingent on the collaborative efforts of the other groups involved.

Identification of possible abuse victims precedes reporting suspected abuse; reporting precedes the ability of child protection service agencies to intervene and subsequently to provide services.

It is frustrating for an educator to strongly suspect abuse, subsequently report it, and then come to the conclusion that "nothing was done." It is equally frustrating for a protective service worker to investigate a school's report of abuse, determine that more substantial evidence must be gathered before going to court for mandated intervention, and never hear from the school again.

It is our hope that through increased awareness of the responsibilities of each party and of the limitations within which each party must operate, collaborative efforts between community agencies and schools will be enhanced.

Note: This handbook highlights Oregon laws and statutes that pertain to child abuse. Of coure, it is essential for residents of other states to stay abreast of revision and expansion of child abuse laws in their own state.

Recently, many states have enacted a flurry of child abuse legislation. In 1986 and 1987 alone, over four-hundred pieces of abuse and neglect legislation affecting schools and social service agencies were passed nationally. Although all fifty states have enacted statutes to address the problem, states differ in such areas as legal definitions of abuse and neglect, reporting procedures, who is required to report, extent of immunity granted to reporters, and penalties for failure to report. Based on a survey she conducted in 1985, Jacqueline Vaughn Switzer notes that there is "great variation in how child abuse laws are written and in how various school systems interpret them."

FACTS ABOUT ABUSE

On October 13, 1985, the Oregon Legislature's House Bill 2160 became law. This bill served to bring Oregon's reporting statute in line with P.L. 98-457, the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. H.B. 2160 revised Oregon Law (O.R.S. 418.740 to 418.775) regarding the definition of abuse.

LEGAL DEFINITIONS

Abuse is now defined in this bill as "threatened harm to a child," which means that a child at substantial risk of harm may require protection as much as a child already harmed by abuse.

H.B. 2160 added "mental injury," known as "emotional abuse," as a new type of child abuse requiring reporting. This bill also clarified definitions of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, and neglect.

In addition, H.B. 2160 amended O.R.S. 418.990(5) by raising the fine for failure to report child abuse to $1,000, and extended the statute of limitations for prosecution to 18 months.

The following are the legal definitions (O.R.S. 418.740 - 418.775) of the various types of child abuse requiring report as clarified by Children's Services Division.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is defined as: "Any physical injury to a child which has been caused by other than accidental means, including any injury which appears to be at variance with the explanation given of the injury." Such injuries may include bruises, burns, fractures, cuts, sprains, bites, internal injuries, or damage to sight, hearing, or brain function.

Neglect

Neglect is defined as: "Negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child, including but not limited to the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care.

However, "any child who is under care or treatment solely by spiritual means pursuant to the religious beliefs or practices of the child or the child's parent or guardian shall not, for this reason alone, be considered a neglected or maltreated child under this section."

Prior to H.B. 2160, the definition of neglect only included that neglect which led to physical harm, and children under treatment by spiritual means were excluded from consideration.

According to Children's Services Division, the following definitions of neglect categories more completely address this issue:

Inadequate food/nutrition: poor hygiene: This means that a child's physical needs have not been met on a continuing and chronic basis. The child's diet is so poor that the child may appear hungry or listless.

A lack of adequate clothing to protect from the weather and hygiene so poor that the child is avoided by peers are other specific definitions.

Inadequate shelter: This includes a failure to provide protection from the weather which may be caused by no heat source or broken windows. Other situations might include gas leaks, accessible dangerous drugs or poison, exposed electrical wiring, the presence of human or animal feces, or rodents in the home.

Lack of supervision: This includes a child left alone or held responsible for other children for extended time periods in situations judged to be beyond the child's age, social maturity, or judgment to handle safely.

Other situations might include unreliable or dangerous child care providers, children left unattended in unventilated or unheated cars, and young children left with no adult available for long periods of time.

Medical neglect: This may include a failure to obtain necessary medical care for a child, including the withholding of medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions.

Exploitation: This addresses requiring a child to be involved in criminal activities.

Educational neglect: This addresses parent failure to provide an education by violation of attendance laws.

Abandonment: This includes desertion or a parent decision to abdicate responsibility for a child.

Emotional neglect: This includes a failure to provide emotional nurturing and physical and cognitive stimulation needed to prevent serious developmental deficits, such as lack of speech development, failure to grow, and other mental injuries.

Threatened harm is defined as subjecting a child to a substantial risk of harm to the child's health or welfare. Although "threatened harm" is not specifically a type of abuse, it is a factor to be considered in possible neglect.

Mental Injury or Emotional Abuse

Mental injury or emotional abuse is defined as: Any mental injury to a child, which shall include only observable and substantial impairment of

the child's mental or psychological ability to function caused by cruelty to the child, with due regard to the culture of the child.

Parent behaviors which can cause mental injury include *habitual* scapegoating, ridicule, denigration, threats to health and safety, physical and sexual abuse, torture, and confinement.

Four criteria help to differentiate emotional abuse from occasionally harmful parent behaviors:

1. Parental emotional maltreatment patterns must have an *obvious effect* on the child.

2. The effect of any emotional maltreatment is *observable* in the child's behavior and performance.

3. The continued abuse would lead to *lifelong irreversible* damage to a child's emotional or cognitive functioning.

4. The effect of any emotional maltreatment is a *handicap* to the child; i.e., the child is severely impaired in thinking, learning, or relating to others.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is defined as: Including but not limited to rape, sodomy, sexual abuse, sexual penetration with a foreign object, and incest, as those acts are defined in O.R.S. Chapter 163.

Sexual abuse may include "any forcible sexual assault involving a victim under age 18; or sexual contact between a child and another youth or adult in which threats, bribes, or similar methods are used to get the child to participate; or any sexual contact between a child and a person of power or authority."

Additional examples of sexual abuse include fondling, voyeurism, and sexual harassment/ intimidation.

Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation is defined as: Contributing to the sexual delinquency of a minor, as defined in O.R.S. Chapter 163, and any other conduct which allows, employs, authorizes, permits, induces, or encourages a child to engage in the performing for people to observe or the photographing, filming, tape recording, or other exhibition which, in whole or in part, depicts sexual conduct or contact, as defined in O.R.S. 167.002 or described in sections 2 and 3, Chapter 557, Oregon Laws 1985, or sexual abuse involving a child, but not including any conduct which is part of any investigation conducted pursuant to O.R.S. 418.760 and which is not designed to serve educational or other legitimate purposes; and allowing, permitting, encouraging, or hiring a child to engage in prostitution, as defined in O.R.S. Chapter 167.

In summary, sexual exploitation refers to the use of children for pornography or prostitution.

Fatalities

Fatalities of children, in which abuse or neglect may be a suspected factor, must be reported to law enforcement and/or Children's Services Division.

PREVALENCE DATA

More than one million children are abused or neglected annually in the United States.[1] The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect estimates that over 5,000 children die as a result.[2]

Although the actual incidence is unknown, there are more cases than are ever reported; some experts say only one in five cases is reported.

Child abuse and exploitation were first addressed by child labor laws at the turn of the century. The issues were not really addressed again until the 1960s. In 1961, Dr. C. Henry Kempe coined the term "battered child syndrome," and concern and awareness have continued to grow from that time on. Each state has its own version of child abuse laws and they vary widely.

Oregon first passed child abuse legislation by 1966, mandating only that physicians report child abuse. More legislation was passed in 1971, then revised in 1985 to more clearly comply with P.L. 98-457, the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. Since 1971, over 100,000 children in Oregon have been identified as victims of abuse.

CAUSES OF CHILD ABUSE

There is no single cause of child abuse. There are a multitude of factors, from individual to societal, that contribute to each abuse case.

Societally, the acceptance of violence, the belief that parents have the right to treat children as they choose, and the avoidance of involvement in the affairs of other people all contribute to the continuation of child abuse. Individually, child abusers have several characteristics in common:

- They may lack information regarding parenting and child development.
- They may expect too much of their children.
- They may make unrealistic demands of children.
- They may have experienced abuse as children.
- They may perceive themselves as isolated from community support.

Child abuse crosses all social and economic strata and is usually a parent response to stressful situations. Parents with poor coping skills or a history of having been abused themselves are more vulnerable to the

stresses of change. The following events could precipitate child abuse on the part of such a parent:

- death of a significant person
- physical or mental illness
- divorce or separation
- financial problems
- moving
- school problems of the child

Some children may be at greater risk of being abused if they are difficult to manage either emotionally or physically. Some factors may be:

- whether the parents wanted the child originally
- physical handicaps of the child
- mental handicaps of the child
- the child's position in the family (birth order)
- whether the child seems "different" from other children or family members

Child abuse is usually not a planned action on the part of the perpetrator; it is a situation that has become out of control. Abuse tends to be repetitive and usually increases in severity and frequency unless there is some intervention.

IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

School staff typically identify possible victims of child abuse through physical indications on the student's body, behavioral indications demonstrated by the student, or parental clues. Such information most often is obtained through direct observation, interviews with the child or parents, or a report of suspected abuse given by a third party.

IDENTIFICATION

Several physical and behavioral indications are displayed on pages 1 and 2. Those listed indications are meant to reflect some of the most common warning signals to look for; they are not meant to include all of the possible indications.

Observing the presence of one indication in a student may or may not lead to a suspicion of abuse. The repeated presence of an indication, the existence of several indications in combination, or the appearance of unexplained injury should alert school staff to suspect abuse and subsequently to report it to the proper authorities so it can be investigated further.

Physical Indicators

Physical indications range from mild to severe and involve the student's physical appearance. Physical indications can suggest physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or emotional abuse.

One of the key factors in connecting possible abuse with injuries is the lack of explanation for such injuries. Examples of an unexplained injury might include:

- There is a contradiction between the way the injury is said to have occurred and the physical findings.
- The child attributes injury to an improbable cause.
- Parents blame the injury on a third party.
- Parents appear hesitant in giving an explanation of how the injury might have happened.

Behavioral Indicators

Behavioral indications also range from mild to severe and are noticeable because such behaviors fall outside the range of typical behavior expected of students of a particular group.

Children react differently to being abused. There is no one single reaction or behavior that can be clearly associated with child abuse. There are, however, a number of possible behaviors which have been found to correlate strongly with abuse.

Behavioral indications sometimes exist alone, but more often are found in combination with physical indications.

It is extremely important for school staff to stay alert and responsive to the behavioral indications which students exhibit. Students will rarely report they are being abused.

As they are unable to stop the abuse, they frequently demonstrate behaviors and develop coping mechanisms which bring them to the attention of others. School staff are in a valuable position to recognize sudden changes in typical behavior patterns of their students and thus respond to their need for protection.

Parental Clues

A great deal of information about a family can be obtained through routine conversations with parents and children. Parents and children often discuss details of family life, discuss methods of discipline, or directly ask for help with a problem in conversations with teachers.

Through conversations with parents, valuable information can be obtained by school staff regarding how the parent feels about the child. The presence of child abuse may be indicated if the parent:

- indicates homicidal thoughts/feelings toward the child
- tells of using objects (belts, whips, clothes hangers) to discipline the child
- is unable to describe positive characteristics of the child
- uses "out of control," harsh, and often unpredictable discipline
- singles out one child as "bad," "evil," or "beyond control"
- berates, humiliates, or belittles the child constantly
- turns to the child to have his/her own needs met
- is impulsive, unable to use internal controls
- demonstrates indifference toward the child
- is unable/unwilling to meet the child's basic needs and provide a safe environment
- behaves in a bizarre or irrational way
- misuses alcohol or other drugs

Family circumstances may also provide clues regarding the possibility of abuse. When families are isolated from all sources of support and have nobody to turn to in times of crisis, the risk of abuse increases.

Other factors related to family stress such as marital, economic, emotional, or social factors can also increase the likelihood of abuse occurring.

Characteristics of Abusers

In identifying families where abuse occurs, it is important to understand that child abuse can occur in any family, regardless of socioeconomic status, education, religion, ethnic background, or other factors.

Abusers come from all professions, represent all levels of intelligence, and represent a cross-section of emotional and psychiatric disturbances.

While not all of the underlying factors that can cause an adult to abuse a child are known, research indicates that when a certain kind of adult caretaker is under enough stress, and when the child demonstrates certain behaviors, abuse may result. London and Stile[3] indicate that the following characteristics are commonly found in potential child abusers. The caretaker:

- has a history of being abused and/or neglected as a child
- uses physical punishment as the primary method of disciplining a child
- has unrealistic expectations that are inconsistent with the developmental age of the child
- has had no models of successful family relationships and, therefore, has little notion of parenting skills
- does not have friends or family to help with the heavy demands of caring for small children
- reports that there was not much love or emotional support from adults during his/her childhood
- has poor impulse control
- has an undue fear of "spoiling" the child by "giving in" to the child or allowing the child to "get away with" anything

COMMUNICATING WITH THE STUDENT ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE

While school staff members have the legal responsibility to report *suspected* child abuse or neglect, they do not have the responsibility for investigating the possible abuse. There are times, however, when school staff may want to communicate with a student about how the student sustained a particular injury to determine if there is reason to suspect abuse.

At other times, school staff may be talking with a student and abuse is disclosed by the student. In these situations, it is important to communicate appropriately and accurately so that the following occur:

- Trust is maintained.
- Additional information can be gathered.
- The student feels supported.
- The result of such communication enhances rather than interferes with the investigation process.

Helpful Considerations

- Interview the student in a place that ensures privacy.
- Reassure students that they are not at fault.
- Sit near the student rather than behind a table or desk.
- Communicate in language the student understands.
- Ask the student for clarification of any words or terms which are not understood.
- Tell the student that the interview is confidential (See exceptions

below.)
- Give support and assistance.
- Tell the student if further action will take place.
- Develop a plan with the student for ensuring safety once the disclosure of abuse or neglect has been made.

Things to Avoid

- Accusing anyone as being the perpetrator of the abuse
- Forcing a student to remove clothing to show injuries
- Promising to keep everything the student says a secret
- Asking the student to conceal from the parents the conversation regarding possible abuse
- Allowing the student to feel "at fault"
- Suggesting answers to the student
- Pressing or probing for details of the abuse
- Displaying horror, shock, or judgment of parents, student, or the situation
- Using a group of staff to interview or communicate with the student

Discussing the Issue of Confidentiality

It is important to let the student know that the conversation is confidential and that other school staff and classmates will not be told about what the student says.

It is also important, early on in the conversation, to let the student know the limits of confidentiality, or the circumstances in which confidential information will be shared.

While there are a number of ways to discuss the limits of confidentiality, Gil[5] provides one such example:

"What we will be discussing here is confidential unless and until you give me permission to share it, with three exceptions:

"1. if I think you're going to hurt yourself

"2. if I think you're going to hurt someone else

"3. if I think someone or something is hurting you, including your parents

"When any of those things are going on, I'll need to let someone know and try to get additional help for you."

Reporting

The primary intent of Oregon's Reporting Laws (ORS 418.740- 418.775) is to **protect the child**.

Why Report?

Necessary social services cannot be provided unless the situation is reported to the appropriate authorities. The report is considered **a request for an investigation** into a suspected incident of abuse or neglect; it is not an already established fact.

A suspicion of child abuse means only that the reporter has **reasonable cause** to believe the child has been abused.

Reporting suspected child abuse is the **beginning of a helping process for both children and families**. Early identification leads to intervention to prevent further child abuse, safeguard and enhance the welfare of already abused children, and provide services to improve parental capabilities to respond appropriately to children's needs.

School staff who report suspected child abuse may well be protecting and serving more than just the identified student. There may be other children in the home in need of protection. Parents may be served by reports, as well.

Child abuse may be a way for parents to call attention to family problems for which they are unable to ask for help directly.

Who Must Report?

Oregon Revised Statute 418.750 states that "Any public or private official having reasonable cause to believe that any child with whom the official comes in contact in an official capacity has suffered abuse, or that any person with whom the official comes in contact in an official capacity has abused a child shall report or cause a report to be made."

Public or private officials, according to law, include:

- Physician, including any intern or resident
- Dentist
- School employee
- Licensed practical nurse or registered nurse
- Employee of the Department of Human Resources, county health department, community mental health program, or licensed child-care agency
- Peace officer (city or municipal police department, sheriff's office, state police, and county juvenile department)
- Psychologist
- Clergyman
- Social worker
- Optometrist
- Chiropractor
- Certified provider of day care or foster care, or an employee thereof
- Attorney
- Naturopathic physician

Any individual who is named in the reporting law must report abuse. If the individual confers with a superior and a decision is made that the superior complete the report, one report is sufficient. However, if the superior disagrees, the individual with the original suspicion must report.

The penalty for mandated reporters who fail to report a suspected victim of child abuse is a fine not to exceed $1,000 (ORS 418.990(5)). A psychiatrist, psychologist, clergyman, or attorney shall not be required to report information communicated by a person if the communication is privileged under ORS 40.225 to 40.295.

While Oregon laws on mandated reporting do not extend to all Oregon citizens, school personnel are often in a position of encouraging citizens to report suspected cases. Over one-third of the substantiated cases of child abuse are reported by concerned citizens who are not required to report.

Many times, school staff receive calls from community members who express concern about possible abuse situations. Facilitating their reporting of such information to Children's Services or the local law enforcement agency may initiate needed services to children and families.

Who Should Reports Be Made to?

As stated in ORS 418.755, "an oral report shall be made **immediately** by telephone or otherwise to the local office of the Children's Services Division or to a law enforcement agency within the county where the person making the report is at the time of his contact."

A local police department, county sheriff, county juvenile department, or Oregon State Police are all considered law enforcement agencies.

What Should Be Reported?

If known, reports of suspected child abuse should include:

- Name, age, and address of child.
- Name, address, and phone number of parents or other persons responsible for caretaking.
- Nature and extent of abuse.
- Name and address of alleged abuser.
- Name of person making report (necessary for mandated reporters).
- Any evidence of previous abuse, any explanations given by the caretaker for injuries, and any other information which the reporter believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the abuse or identifying the abuser should be included as well.

School districts are encouraged to develop their own reporting forms

for documenting oral reports to local authorities. See pages 4 and 5 for a sample reporting form.

It is important that such reporting forms be placed in a separate, confidential Child Abuse and Neglect File and *not placed in personal student files.*

At the time the report is made, it may be advisable for the staff member making the report to request to be notified of the disposition of the investigation. Investigators usually do attempt to communicate such dispositions; however, making a request for such information may serve as a reminder.

Are Reports Kept Confidential?

While the person doing the reporting is guaranteed a substantial degree of anonymity, the reporter's identity may be disclosed if the matter becomes the subject of court action. If such court action is initiated, the reporting person may be called in as a witness or the court may order that the reporter's name be disclosed. Only those with firsthand knowledge of the child's situation can provide testimony in court.

What Is the Liability for Reporting?

Oregon Law (ORS 418.762) provides immunity from liability, civil or criminal, for any person who participates in good faith in the making of a report of child abuse and who has reasonable grounds for making the report. Such immunity also applies with respect to participation of the reporter in any judicial proceeding resulting from such a report.

Good faith refers to "an honest belief by the reporter that the child was abused or that the substance of the report, which may be only a suspicion, is valid."[6]

There is minimal chance that a school staff member would be sued successfully by a parent for reporting suspected abuse unless the report was made for malicious reasons.

What Is the Liability for Failing to Report?

In an effort to encourage reporting, Oregon law indicates that failure to report suspected child abuse is a misdemeanor and penalties may not exceed $1,000.

It is possible for school staff members who fail to report suspected child abuse to be held civilly liable for negligent performance of their duties and, in addition, to be subject to legal, administrative, and licensing cancellation penalties.

What Is the Relationship of Confidentiality and Reporting Laws?

The 1974 Federal Family Educational and Privacy Act, often referred to as the "Buckley Amendment," addresses regulations about the confidential nature of school records.

With regard to reporting suspected child abuse or neglect, the reports usually are based upon a school staff member's personal knowledge or observations, which are not considered part of school records.

In addition, the law indicates that "school records may be revealed without parental consent if the information is necessary in an emergency to protect the health and safety of the student,"[7] with the consent of Children's Services Division or by court order.

Who Should Inform Parents When Reports Are Made?

In Oregon, according to an Attorney General's opinion, parents should only be informed of a child abuse report by Children's Services Division or by a law enforcement agency.

These agencies are responsible for completing the investigations and, therefore, are also the agencies responsible for notifying the parties involved. School staff's notification to parents prior to an investigation can result in a number of negative outcomes. Most importantly, parents may respond to such information by further punishment or abuse of the children involved.

Second, prior parental notification can greatly contaminate and impede the investigative process. For example, parents may "coach" the children on what to say and what not to say.

Difficulties Encountered in Making Reports

Making a suspected child abuse report generates a lot of thoughts and feelings for school staff.

Some staff members have strong beliefs that such action is a violation of parents' rights and as such is "none of their business." Other staff members may report *suspected* abuse but have personally decided that abuse has *definitely* occurred. They may thus have predetermined ideas regarding "correct" action on the part of public agencies.

If they have reported previously and not received such "correct" action from agencies, they may think that reporting is of little use. There is often a concern on the part of school staff that reporting suspected abuse will cause a child to experience increased emotional pain in the resolution of the problem.

Other staff have concerns that the suspected abuse report may cause parents to become angry, hostile, and possibly threatening to them and/or other staff.

All the above-mentioned thoughts and feelings are widely experienced reactions to reporting of suspected abuses. Staff inservices which encourage discussion of these concerns assist staff members to clarify their legal responsibilities in relation to personal processes.

A school policy which encourages team support for those persons making a report also serves to help staff members deal with concerns. The report is a legal requirement of school staff members, despite any personal thoughts and feelings.

What Is the School's Role Following a Report?

Reporting is just the beginning of the child protective process. While the legal responsibility of school staff members may end with reporting, the professional and ethical responsibilities continue.

School staff may be in a position to provide direct services such as medical or counseling services, parenting education, or special education programs for the child. Indirect services are also available through schools, including liaison and referral services, evaluation services, or advocacy.

Regardless of the school's ability to provide direct or indirect services, it is necessary for school staff to encourage a positive relationship with the student and parents and to cooperate with the agencies charged with the responsibility for making investigations and ensuring child protection.

Cooperating with the Investigation

The person investigating the report of suspected child abuse may want to talk with school staff about a particular student, regardless of whether the report was made by the school or not. Participating in such an interview and providing information to the investigator in cases of suspected abuse is appropriate and not considered a breach of confidentiality.

Such exchanges of information may occur in informal ways such as through phone contacts or brief visits, or in a more formal manner such as a meeting between the investigator and school staff or an official request to review student records.

Schools are the only places in which children are seen daily over long periods of time by professionals who have received training in observing their behavior and appearance.

School staff members often have a wealth of information that can enhance the investigative process. Examples of information school staff are likely to have include, but are not limited to, the following:

- pattern of school attendance
- observable injuries
- ability to get along with peers
- ability to function at grade level
- dress
- pattern of behavior, appetite, or sleep
- marked behavior changes
- health of student or other children in family

- parental strengths and needs
- observations of parental reactions to the student's school problems
- parental requests for help or information about parents already gettinhelp
- parental responses to school requests

The above listed information, as well as other pertinent information, is sometimes critical to the investigator in making an assessment to determine whether abuse has occurred, whether the family needs assistance, and what services would most likely be of benefit to the family.

Remaining Supportive of the Student and Family

A family faced with a suspected abuse report and pending investigation experiences a number of stresses and resulting uneasiness. It is important for school staff to show caring, concern, and support for the student, siblings, and parents during such times.

Effort should be made to decrease hostility between child and parents, if present, and to enhance the positive aspects of their relationship.[8] Broadhurst suggests that school staff can strengthen relationships between family members if they:

- "are honest with the child, the parents and the family about their concern for the child
- explain that they are legally required to report suspected child abuse
- avoid blaming the parents or adult caregivers, accusing them, describing them negatively, or belittling them in front of the child
- convey an intent to help — not hurt — the family"

How to Assist the Abused Child in the School Environment

Clearly, the most effective way schools can combat the negative consequences of abuse or neglect for a student is to provide as many positive and supportive school experiences as possible. London and Still[9] suggest the following ways schools can assist the abused or neglected student:

- "treat the maltreated child with respect and dignity
- be sensitive to the student's needs, feelings and concerns
- be supportive of the abused child
- tailor experiences for student success
- help students understand parental abuse of children
- be in touch with your own feelings
- continue to watch for repeated incidents of maltreatment
- have a school wide student management process which promotes the above goals"

The classroom environment can serve to promote the healthy physical, mental, social, and emotional development of all students.

In accomplishing such goals with students who have experienced abuse, it

is critical for school staff to consider how they teach these children, what kind of role models they are demonstrating, and what unspoken messages they may be sending.

In considering the kind of messages being sent to students, it may be helpful to answer the following questions, in relation to your school environment:

1. Are students given the opportunity to learn self-discipline and self-control, or does the teacher/administrator attempt to control their behavior?

2. Do students participate in the development of class and school rules, or do staff simply make up the rules and hand them down to the students?

3. Do students know ahead of time what the consequences of their actions will be, or do teachers/administrators decide what to do at the time an inappropriate behavior occurs?

4. Are natural and logical consequences used for managing behavior, or are such things as derogatory name-calling, humiliation, unrealistic expectations, and labeling of students used as means to discipline students?

5. Is corporal punishment or any use of physical force by an adult banned or permitted in the school?

Children who have been victims of abuse are likely to see themselves:

- as victims
- as having little control over their lives
- as unworthy individuals
- as people who deserve to be abused

A Word of Caution

The methods and practices utilized by staff in schools can either serve to reinforce and even magnify the self-perceptions mentioned above or they can promote and facilitate students gradually coming to believe in themselves and their worth as individuals.

The thought of a child being abused brings up intense negative emotions in many people, including school staff. Some staff, as a result of such emotions, tend to "feel sorry" for the students who have been abused and either remove student expectations or try to shield and protect them from any further negative experiences.

Protecting such students from the natural and logical consequences of their own actions may only serve to reinforce the idea that they do not have control over their own lives.

In addition, such students need successes; removing expectations for their behavior may be robbing them of opportunities to experience success.

AGENCY RESPONSE TO REPORTS OF SUSPECTED ABUSE

Once a report concerning the possible occurrence of abuse or neglect is made, an investigation of the situation will be made by a child protection service worker and/or law enforcement official as soon as possible.

Investigation

By law, an investigation must occur within seven (7) days of the report unless an emergency extension (not to exceed 30 days) is authorized by the supervisor of the Child Protection Unit of Children's Services Division.

An investigation includes:

- "determining the nature and extent of abuse and neglect
- evaluating the child's condition, including the danger to the child and the need for medical attention
- identifying the problems underlying the abuse or neglect
- evaluating parental or caretaker responses to the identified problems and willingness to cooperate to protect the child
- taking appropriate action to protect the child"[10]

An investigation process may include interviewing the parents, student and siblings, neighbors, relatives, school personnel, and anyone else who may have knowledge of the parents or child which would aid in understanding the family.

If it appears possible that the student's injuries are a result of abuse, the child will be taken immediately to a physician for examination.

As mentioned previously, the investigator may obtain information with school staff through informal processes such as telephone contact or brief interviews or through more formal processes such as meetings with school staff or reviewing student files through judicial order.

Investigations Occurring on School Premises

ORS 418.760 addresses the following points with regard to investigations conducted on public school premises:

- The school administrator shall first be notified that the investigation is to take place unless the school administrator is a subject of the investigation.
- The investigator may or may not decide to include the school adminis-

trator or a school staff member designated by the administrator to be present to facilitate the investigation.

- The school shall advise the person doing the investigating of the child's handicapping conditions, if there are any, prior to any interview with the affected child.
- Anything that transpires during an investigation in which the administrator or staff member participates shall be confidential and shall not become part of the student's school records.

The only exception to confidentiality here occurs when the administrator or school staff member is asked to testify at any subsequent trial resulting from the investigation or is interviewed by the litigants prior to such a trial.

At the Children's Protection Workshop sponsored by Linn-Benton ESD in February 1988, a Linn County sheriff and an Albany city policeman both indicated that law enforcement personnel prefer to conduct investigations out of uniform when such investigations occur in the schools.

They added, however, that some circumstances necessitate the use of uniformed officers.

Provision of Services

Special rehabilitation services for prevention and treatment of child abuse are provided by Children's Services Division and other community resources to children and families, including homemaker services, parenting classes, respite daycare, foster care, financial assistance, psychological and psychiatric services, and sexual abuse treatment.

Protective Custody

If, during the investigative process, there is found to be an immediate danger to the child's well-being, Oregon law permits Children's Services Division or a law enforcement agency to take a child into protective custody without a court order.

If it is determined that the child's physical or emotional well-being cannot be protected while he remains at home, the child is placed in a shelter care home licensed through Children's Services Division.

Once a child is placed in shelter care, parents are notified immediately and a Juvenile Court hearing is held within 24 judicial hours.

The purpose of such a hearing is to review the child's need for protection and shelter care placement while the investigation continues. During the hearing, parents are given the opportunity to present evidence that their child can be returned home without danger of physical injury or emotional harm.

Juvenile Court Hearings

The Juvenile Court becomes involved in child abuse cases when it is felt that the assistance of the court is necessary to protect the child. Juvenile court hearings are held when:

1. Children are removed from their parent's custody, or
2. Children's Services Division supervision of abused or neglected children in their own homes is ordered.

The court ensures that rights of both the parent and the child are protected. Parents may seek legal counsel, and an attorney will be appointed for them by the court if they cannot afford one.

A "shelter hearing" is held in Juvenile Court within 24 judicial hours of an emergency protective custody situation in which the child has been removed from the parent's care. A subsequent hearing is held to consider the facts of the child abuse/neglect investigation.

When the court thinks that the child continues to need protection outside the home until the problems initiating the removal are resolved, additional hearings are necessary.

At each hearing, the court reviews both the efforts made by the parents to remedy the problems, and the services arranged and/or provided by Children's Services Division to help the parents and child.

The court's removal standards are stringent. Removal of a child from his/her family is ordered primarily when no other alternatives exist to protect the child. When removal of a child is necessary, the Court has several options to consider for placement.

Depending on the needs of the child, the court may choose to place the child with the noncustodial parent, with a relative, in a foster home, or in a group home. The goal of the court, as well as the Children's Services Division, is to reunite the family as soon as possible.

To facilitate this goal, the court may mandate the provision of specific services to the family and may order the parents to meet certain conditions before the child returns home.

Criminal Prosecution

Law enforcement agencies are mandated by Oregon Statutes to investigate reported cases of child abuse and to file a report of the investigation results to the District Attorney's office. Criminal prosecution is at the sole discretion of the District Attorney.

It is rare for criminal prosecution to occur in physical abuse cases; however, such prosecution is common with cases of sexual abuse. In order to

protect the sexual abuse victim from further abuse and to initiate the treatment process, the sexual offender is frequently prosecuted.

Central Registry

The Central Registry was established by Oregon law and is maintained by Children's Services Division.

The purpose of this registry is to gather data on the incidence and characteristics of child abuse in Oregon. It also serves as a resource for identifying repeated cases of abuse. When a child has been a confirmed victim of abuse, the child's name is put into the Central Registry.

A physician, a law enforcement agency, or a child abuse registry from another state can determine if a child has previously been a victim in Oregon. The Central Registry number in Salem, Oregon, is (503) 378-3016.

Limitations Involved in Emotional Abuse Prosecution

There have been no Oregon court cases regarding emotional abuse because the legislation (as it is now written) defines the abuse in terms of its impact on the child. This cause and effect is very difficult to prove after the fact, and thus Children's Services Division is put in a position of gathering a great deal of evidence over a long period of time in order to demonstrate the cause and effect relationship.

Thus far, there has not been a case with both a sufficient amount of evidence and enough clarity regarding cause and effect to allow a judge to rule that emotional abuse has occurred to the extent that a child has been placed in CSD custody as a result.

There has been some frustration expressed by those persons reporting suspected emotional abuse when they have not felt that immediate action was taken by CSD in response to the report(s). Given the information regarding the legislative wording of this statute, it is important that reporters of such suspected abuse see themselves as an important part of an ongoing processs.

Although their report may not result in immediate visible CSD action, it may be a critical part of a history of community concern necessary to prove cause and effect.

SCHOOL PREVENTION EFFORTS

While child abuse prevention training is an issue of concern for entire communities, schools share a larger responsibility in prevention and intervention training. Children at risk for abuse and victims of child abuse can be found in every school; consequently, school staff must respond to such children, regardless of whether or not they have had adequate training.

Developing a positive, comprehensive child abuse prevention training effort in the schools is an essential, attainable goal. Such a comprehensive effort would include components of staff training, student training, and community awareness activities.

A "quick fix" approach such as showing a film on child abuse or bringing in a guest speaker once a year does little to empower children with the knowledge and skills necessary to cope if they become victims of abuse. Such an approach also fails to give school staff the skills they need to respond effectively in child abuse situations.

STAFF TRAINING

Through a national study conducted by the Education Commission of the States in 1977, it was found that teacher education did not include adequate preparation on child abuse prevention.

The report indicated that in their entire training programs, teachers receive less than three hours of classroom instruction on the topic of child abuse and neglect; this discussion is usually inserted sporadically throughout the curriculum.[11]

Topics to Include in Staff Training

General Information on Child Abuse

- Definitions of types of child abuse
- Incidence of child abuse
- Effects of abuse on children
- Etiology of child abuse, including parent characteristics, child characteristics, and types of stress associated with abuse

Indicators of Child Abuse

- Physical indicators
- Behavioral indicators
- Emotional indicators

Laws Related to Child Abuse

- Legal responsibilities regarding reporting
- Consequences of failing to report
- Confidentiality and child/family privacy rights

- Legal immunities
- Ethical issues in reporting child abuse

Community Resources

- Roles of individuals and social agencies involved with cases of suspected child abuse
- The school's relationship with child protective services, the police, and other community organizations

Assisting the Abused Child in School

- How to talk with children in crisis
- Do's and don'ts of responding to children who tell
- How to respond to adults who have been abused

Developing Other Prevention Strategies

- Strategies for teachers and other adults to discuss child abuse in the context of the regular curriculum
- Age-appropriate materials for educators to incorporate into the classroom
- Encouragement from teachers and other adults to develop the confidence and skills they need to feel comfortable discussing with children the realities of child abuse
- Assistance for teachers in understanding when to get additional help and where and how to do this

School Policy and Procedures

- Rationale for child abuse policy
- Policy and procedures for staff's response to prevention, intervention, and postvention in child abuse situations
- Specific procedures for reporting cases and contacting community agencies
- Use of forms required for reporting and for providing documentation of efforts
- Procedures and techniques to use when interviewing children

STUDENT TRAINING

Efforts to assist children in feeling empowered and responsible constitute abuse prevention and most often include components on:

- Self-empowerment
- Problem solving skills
- Responsible decision making
- Resources for support

Child abuse prevention efforts for students usually include an abuse curriculum; however, such curricula are more effective if they are used in conjunction with academic and social curriculum materials, all designed to empower children and encourage responsible student decision making.

There are many curriculum materials available which are designed to teach children about preventing child abuse. It may be helpful to review the following questions in choosing a particular curriculum:

- Can child abuse materials easily be integrated into the curriculum and taught by the regular classroom teacher or some other trusted adult?
- Is the program designed in such a way that knowledge and skills are reinforced outside the classroom (with peers, at home, etc.)?
- Are curriculum materials age appropriate, distinguishing between developmental levels?
- Will the material be integrated and reinforced throughout the different grades with the long term-goal of preparing children to become healthy adults?

Most child abuse prevention curricula include but are not limited to the following topics:

- Abuse is never the victim's fault.
- Who to tell, including people outside the family, if they are being abused.
- Concept of unsafe/danger.
- We all have the right to feel safe all the time.
- There's nothing so awful we can't talk with someone about it.
- What would you do if...? (abuse) situations.
- What would you do if you told someone and they didn't believe you or didn't get the abuse stopped?
- Early warning signs of abuse.
- Instruction, understanding, and identification of their personal safety network.

Things to Avoid in Child Abuse Training

- Focusing on strangers
- Indicating the abuser is sick, crazy, or weird
- Scaring or confusing students
- Leaving the student open to assuming guilt or responsibility for the offense
- Involving religious issues

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

The major goals of community awareness programs are to:

- Assist community members in realizing a problem exists.
- Help them identify the symptoms.

- Raise awareness of available resources in the community that can provide assistance.
- Encourage people to report suspected cases of abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

Schools, working collaboratively with other local agencies, can do a great deal to create recognition in the community that child abuse is a significant problem, and then to encourage a widespread commitment to solving it. Raising the topic of child abuse as a public concern rather than a private problem is crucial.

In addition, conveying the message that abusive individuals are in need of services and understanding rather than punishment and ridicule is important.

There are a variety of ways schools attempt to raise community awareness of child abuse and neglect. For example:

- providing parenting classes
- providing facilities and/or staff to hold public forums
- disseminating child abuse information via posters, pamphlets, or newsletters
- making public service announcements on radio or television
- participating in and supporting the prevention activities of community-based service teams such as youth service teams
- collaborating with child advocacy organizations
- providing a meeting site for self-help groups such as Parents Anonymous
- sharing school books and films with community agencies for presentations and inservices
- offering facilities and staff for afterschool supervision of children

POLICY AND PROCEDURE DEVELOPMENT

The existence of policies and the procedures designed to implement such policies are essential to a school's efforts toward the prevention of child abuse.

The primary purpose of child abuse policies is to encourage school staff to report suspected abuse, thereby enhancing the collaborative effort between community agencies and schools to intervene when necessary.

While schools vary widely with regard to the specificity and detail in their child abuse policies and procedures, success is more likely when the plans clarify the school's commitment to prevention and intervention in abuse situations and provide clear processes for all school staff to follow when intervention is necessary.

QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN RELATION TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. Is the Statement of Concern for Abused Children and Their Families widely disseminated to staff, students, parents, and community members?
2. Are areas of child abuse and neglect well defined in the policies and procedures?
3. Is someone assigned responsibility for informing parents and the local community of the school's actions on behalf of abused children?
4. Are troubled families encouraged to seek assistance for their problems?
5. Does the district include a mandated statement against maltreatment of students by school employees? (See page 40 for an example of such a statement.)

   A. Are the district/building/classroom discipline policies consistent with the commitment to the prevention of child abuse?

   B. Is corporal punishment forbidden in the district/building/classroom?

Reporting Requirements That Adhere to State Law

1. Are legal requirements for reporting abuse published and distributed?
2. Are guidelines available for all staff which specify procedures for making oral and written reports?

   A. With what other school personnel does the employee making the report need to share this information?

   B. Is the employee who makes a phone report expected to have another school employee present during the phone conversation?

3. Is the confidential handling of reports covered in the policies and procedures?

4. Are school staff provided information on how and by whom parents will be notified when the school has filed a report? (See page 21)

5. Are civil and criminal immunities for those who report in good faith described?

6. Are civil, criminal, and administrative penalties for failure to report clearly stated?

Mandating Inservice Training for All Staff

1. Is someone assigned the responsibility of ensuring that every staff member receives information on how to recognize and report child abuse and on district/building policies and procedures?

2. Are inservice training presentations specified in terms of when they will be offered and by whom?

3. Are all students and staff aware of whom to notify if they suspect someone may be a victim of child abuse?

4. Is abuse prevention training and positive safety behavior taught to all students in school?

5. Is someone assigned responsibility for selecting trainers and training materials for child abuse prevention activities?

Encouraging Collaboration with Children's Services and Law Enforcement Agencies

1. Is someone in the district/building assigned primary responsibility for coordinating efforts with the local Children's Services Division office and law enforcement agency toward the prevention of child abuse?

   A. Is there a working agreement between the school and the local CSD office concerning responsible collaboration in reporting and resolving child abuse situations?

   B. Have yearly information-sharing meetings been held among school staff, CSD workers, and law enforcement personnel to share and review procedures, maintain an awareness of each other's duties and responsibilities, update legislative changes, and maintain open lines of communication?

2. Is at least one staff person in the school assigned responsibility for being aware of community resources: the services they provide, ways to access their services, and requirements for eligibility?

3. Is a list of community resources available to all staff?

Promoting Primary Prevention Programs

1. Is the school involved in public awareness efforts toward prevention of child abuse?

2. Does the school sponsor parent education groups?

3. Is a parent education curriculum available in the schools at the secondary level?

4. Are school facilities available for family support services?

5. Does the school provide representation on interagency teams designed to prevent child abuse?

SAMPLE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND STATEMENTS

This section contains excerpts of policies on sexual abuse implemented by the Oregon School Boards Association, by a school district, and by a high school district. The section ends with a sample policy addressing maltreatment of students by school employees.

Sample District Policy as Suggested by the Oregon School Boards Association

Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse

Any school employee who has reasonable cause to believe that any child with whom he/she has come in contact has suffered abuse or neglect, as defined in state law, or that any adult with whom he/she is in contact has abused a child, will immediately notify his/her supervisor, the building principal, or superintendent. A report will be made to the Children's Services Division or the local law enforcement agency.

The superintendent will implement such regulations as are necessary to accomplish the intent of this policy and to comply with state law. Copies of this policy and applicable state laws will be given to all school employees.

END OF POLICY Legal References: ORS 418.750-.755 418.762

Corvallis School District: Board Policy on Child Abuse

Reporting of Child Abuse

BOARD POLICY: All school employees must report to Children's Services Division or a law enforcement agency when there is a reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused (ORS 418.740). Failure to report may result in a fine of up to $1,000.00 (ORS 418.990(5).

I. Reporting Procedures

A. Any school district employee shall orally report suspected child abuse immediately to Benton County Children's Services Division or the appropriate law enforcement agency (Corvallis Police Department, Linn or Benton County Sheriff's Departments).

B. It is the individual employee's responsibility to make the report. It is advised that the call be made in the presence of an administrator or school counselor

C. It is the employee's responsibility to notify the building principal or designee as soon as possible following the abuse report.

D. It is the responsibility of the agency to which the employee reported to contact the child's parents or guardians.

Any doubt about reporting a suspected situation is to be resolved in favor of the child and the report made immediately.

The law provides immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, to all who participate, in good faith, in the making of a report in an abuse investigation, or in any judicial proceedings resulting from such a report.

II. Definitions of Abuse (ORS 418.740)

A. PHYSICAL ABUSE — "Any physical injury to a child which has been caused by other than accidental means, including any injury which appears to be a variance with the explanation given of the injury."

B. MENTAL INJURY — "Any mental injury to a child, which shall include only observable and substantial impairment of the child's mental or psychological ability to function caused by cruelty to the child, with due regard to the culture of the child."

C. SEXUAL ABUSE — "Sexual abuse, including but not limited to rape, sodomy, sexual abuse, sexual penetration with a foreign object and incest, as those acts are defined in ORS Chapter 163."

D. SEXUAL EXPLOITATION — "Sexual exploitation including but not limited to: contribution to the sexual delinquency of a minor, as defined in ORS Chapter 163, and any other conduct which allows, employs, authorizes, permits, induces or encourages a child to engage in the performing for people to observe or the photographing, filming, tape recording or other exhibition which, in whole or in part, depicts sexual conduct or contact as defined in ORS 167.002 or described in sections 2 and 3, Chapter 557, Oregon Laws 1985 (Enrolled Senate Bill 375), or sexual abuse involving a child, but not including any conduct which is not designed to serve educational or other legitimate purposes; and allowing, permitting, encouraging or hiring a child to engage in prostitution, as defined in ORS Chapter 167."

E. NEGLECT — "Negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child, including but not limited to the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter or medical care. However, any child who is under care or treatment solely by spiritual means pursuant to the religious beliefs or practices of the child or the child's parent or guardian shall not, for this reason alone, be considered a neglected or maltreated child under this section."

F. THREATENED HARM — "Threatened harm to a child, which means subjecting a child to a substantial risk of harm to the child's health or welfare."

Hillsboro Union High School District Policy on Child Abuse

All school employees must report or cause a report to be made when there is reasonable reason to believe that a child has been abused (ORS 746, 146.760, 418.740).

1. The report is made to the Children's Services Division or law enforcement personnel (ORS 418.755).

2. School personnel, after properly identifying the caseworker, shall request the child be brought to an office or other location where the interview can be conducted in private without interruption.

3. Parental notification shall be the sole responsibility of the CSD staff or law enforcement officer.

4. At the conclusion of the interview, the caseworker shall notify school personnel and leave any appropriate instructions before leaving the school.

Approved and adopted: 11-19-85

Child Abuse Reporting Procedures and Requirements

Definitions:

1. "Abuse" means:

   a. Any physical injury to a child which has been caused by other than accidental means, including any injury which appears to be at variance with the explanation given of the injury.

   b. Neglect which leads to physical harm and impaired safety. A child who in good faith is under treatment solely by spiritual means through prayer in accordance with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination by a duly accredited practitioner thereof shall, for this reason alone, not be considered a neglected child.

   c. Sexual molestation.

2. "Child" means an unmarried person who is under 18 years of age.

3. "School employee" means any certificated or classified person employed by the school in the normal course of his/her duties.

4. "Law enforcement agency" means:

   a. Any city or municipal police department.
   b. Any county sheriff's office.
   c. The Oregon State Police.
   d. A county juvenile department.

School Employees Must Report

School employees must promptly report or cause a report to be made in their belief (based on reasonable cause) that child abuse has taken place, said report to be made to the building administration.

If this requirement would cause an untimely delay, school employee must report or cause to be reported directly to Children's Services Division or the local law enforcement agency, and then notify the building principal at the earliest opportunity.

After personal observation or receipt of information, the building administrator may request the counselor to make a preliminary investigation. The administrator may report directly to Children's Services Division or the local law enforcement agency.

Content of Report by Administration

An oral report shall be made immediately by telephone to the local office of the Children's Services Division or the law enforcement agency.

The oral report to Children's Services Division or the local law enforcement agency shall contain the following information (if known):

1. Names and addresses of the child and his/her parents and other persons responsible for his/her care.
2. Child's age/birthdate.
3. The time of occurrence and the nature and extent of the abuse (including any evidence of previous abuse).
4. The explanation given for the abuse.
5. The identity of the perpetrator.
6. Any other pertinent information regarding the abuse.
7. The content of the report will be kept in written record by the building administrator.

Investigation of Report

The Children's Services Division or the law enforcement agency is responsible for an immediate investigation of child-abuse reports. In carrying out that responsibility, it may conduct an interview with the child at school. In such instances, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The investigator from the Children's Services Division or the law enforcement agency shall go to the school office, properly identify himself/herself, inform the building administrator that he/she is conducting a child abuse investigation, and inform the building administrator of the name of the child to be interviewed.
2. The building administrator of the school shall determine the name, identity, purpose of the investigator, and the time of the initial report.

The building administrator of the school shall then confer with the investigator before reaching a decision about whether to request that a representative from the school be permitted to participate in the interview. In making this decision, factors to consider are:

a. The extent of school personnel's knowledge of the alleged abuse.

b. The age and maturity of the child.

c. The likelihood that the presence of a school representative would facilitate or hinder the investigation.

d. The continuing responsibility of the school to provide a safe and secure learning environment for the child.

e. The ability of Children's Services Division or the law enforcement agency to investigate the case in another setting.

f. The intent of this policy is to recognize that the law enforcement agency has jurisdiction over all cases of child abuse. The law enforcement agency's authority supercedes that of the public school.

3. At the conclusion of the interview, the investigator shall inform the administrator that the interview has been concluded, and confer as to the immediate disposition of the child, and any further action required of/or information needed by the school personnel.

4. School personnel shall NOT notify or inform the child's parents or other persons responsible for the child's care that the child is the subject of a child abuse investigation. Parental notification shall be the sole responsibility of the child abuse investigator.

School personnel will cooperate with law enforcement agencies when the agency requests an exchange of information on abuse reported to the agency.

Immunity from Liability

School employees who in good faith and on the basis of reasonable grounds make a child abuse report are protected from any civil or criminal liability in connection with such a report. However, they may be required to testify in court regarding their observations notwithstanding the provisions of ORS 44.040.

References: ORS 746, 146.760

Guidelines for Initiating a Child Abuse Report

The school employee must report to the school administration any case which has "reasonable cause" of child abuse. The school administration will make the report to the authorities. The following steps are guidelines:

Step 1: The school employee refers a report to the school administration for reasonable cause of child abuse.

Step 2: The school administrator may request assistance from the counselor in establishing "reasonable cause" of child abuse by:

A. Reviewing the student records.

B. Interviewing the student to gain information to determine "reasonable cause."

C. Conferring with other persons to establish "reasonable cause."

D. Taking immediate and reasonable action on the case so as not to delay the case to the detriment of the student.

Step 3: The school administrator will make a decision to:

A. Report the case as "child abuse" to authorities,

B. Or, not to report the case due to lack of "reasonable cause."

C. A report of the case will be made and kept by the school administration.

Step 4: The school administrator will confer with the school employee who originally referred the case as to the disposition of the case.

ADOPTED: 8-14-79 REVISED: 6-16-81
HILLSBORO UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 3JT
Hillsboro, Oregon 97123

Mandate Against Maltreatment

London and Stile[12] provide the following example of a district policy addressing student maltreatment:

"School employees shall not physically strike a student, verbally abuse a student, leave students unsupervised, sexually abuse a student, allow one student to maltreat another student, or use 'time-out' rooms for long periods of time.

"If the situation warrants, a school employee may physically restrain a student by using a district-approved method.

"If a school employee is reported for maltreating a student(s) the building principal shall make a report to (supply name of appropriate agency). In addition, the school board shall hold an administrative hearing regarding the district's action towards the school employee."

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Information about the community agencies described in this section was obtained by the Linn-Benton ESD for use by school personnel within the ESD's boundaries. The purpose of the Community Resources section is to facilitate collaboration that might assist in dealing with a crisis situation—in this case sexual abuse of children.

Given the complex nature of child abuse, schools can have a greater impact on the problem when they work collaboratively with other agencies. But before they can form partnerships with other agencies, school personnel must be aware of local community agencies that can serve as resources to them. The information about child abuse resources in Linn and Benton Counties, Oregon, can be used as a model for those who wish to collect similar data on organizations in their community that are involved in child abuse prevention and intervention efforts.

For additional guidelines about initiating collaboration with or soliciting information about agencies in your community, see *Volume 1: Introduction and Resources.*

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Benton County Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse
Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence
Child Abuse Hotline
Children's Services Division, Benton County Branch
Children's Services Division, Linn County Branch
Community Outreach, Inc
Community Outreach Parent Education (COPE)
Linn County Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse
Societies League Against Molestation (SLAM)
State Resources
National Resources

BENTON COUNTY COMMITTEE FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

300 SE Goodnight #66
Corvallis, Oregon 97333

Phone: Steve Adkins 000-0000
Karin Magnuson 000-0000
Jane Spitznogle 000-0000
Linda Heath 000-0000

Services Provided:

- The committee is a broad coalition of social service providers, professionals, and concerned citizens who train, educate, and advocate for the prevention of child abuse.
- Projects sponsored include child care relief to families in stress, performances by the Plain Talk Theatre Group, and professional and paraprofessional training programs.

Other Pertinent Information:

- Meetings are held every third Thursday of each month at 12:10 pm in the Martha Room at the First United Methodist Church, 1165 NW Monroe, Corvallis.
- Child care relief is by referral from community agencies.

CENTER AGAINST RAPE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

129 NW 4th Street, Suite 206
PO Box 914
Corvallis, Oregon 97339

Phone: 000-0000 Office
000-0000 (24-hour hotline)

Services Provided:

- Twenty-four hour shelter home, meals, full range of services for victims of sexual or domestic violence. Programs for victims' children are also available.

CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE

Linn County: 000-0000 (8:00 - 5:00 Monday through Friday)
000-0000 (after hours and weekends)

Benton County: 000-0000 (8:00 - 5:00 Monday through Friday
000-0000 (after hours and weekends)

Services Provided:

- Twenty-four hour hotline phone counseling for anyone regarding child abuse or neglect.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIVISION, BENTON COUNTY BRANCH

555 NW 5th Street
Corvallis, Oregon 97330

Phone: 000-0000

Services Provided:

- Provide essential social services (protective, preventive/restorative, adoption, housekeeper, homemaker, intensive family therapy, parent training, incest treatment, permanent planning, and substitute care) to ensure the physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being of children.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIVISION, LINN COUNTY BRANCH

1400 Queen Street SE, Suite 200
Albany, Oregon 97321

Phone: 000-0000

Services Provided:

- Child Protective Services for children who have been neglected or physically or sexually abused, including shelter care, foster care, and residential treatment.
- Sexual abuse treatment which includes group and/or individual treatment. Groups also available for nonoffending mothers.
- Preventive/restorative services which include short-term, goal-oriented counseling and support services. Intensive family therapy is available to families in crisis, as well as homemaker and housekeeping services.
- Parent training services for CSD clients. "Parents In Control" groups are offered.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH, INC

128 SW Ninth Street
Corvallis, Oregon 97333

Phone: 000-0000

Services Provided:

- Crisis intervention, including abuse, runaways, suicide, and emotional support.
- Information and referral, child care referrals, and screening for other emergency services.
- Afterhours reporting to Linn and Benton Children's Services Division.

Other Pertinent Information:

- Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Collect calls accepted.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PARENT EDUCATION (COPE)

128 SW Ninth Street
Corvallis, Oregon 97333

Phone: 000-0000

Services Provided:

- An eight-week program for parents who are experiencing difficulty with their children. Parenting skills, conflict resolution, child development, and needs of parents are among the topics covered.

LINN COUNTY COMMITTEE FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

1400 Queen Street SE
PO Box 844
Albany, Oregon 97321

000-0000

Services Provided:

- Educational services such as speaking for groups, putting on conferences, and developing materials.
- Information resources are made available to schools such as materials for teaching abuse prevention, access to videos and other teaching materials such as "Spiderman" comic books.
- Support to Linn County Crisis Line.

SOCIETIES LEAGUE AGAINST MOLESTATION (SLAM)

41196 Port Drive
Sweet Home, Oregon 97386

Phone: 000-0000 Donaline Points
000-0000 Jean Ott

Services Provided:

- Assist families of victims of molestation and incest.
- Educate on problems, extent, and prevention of sexual molestation.
- Teach children self-protection.
- Help people understand court processes for child abuse.

STATE RESOURCES

- Oregon Chapter, National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse
  1912 SW Sixth Avenue, Room 120
  Portland, Oregon 97201

  Phone: 000-0000

- Parents Anonymous of Oregon
  3550 SE Woodwards
  Portland, Oregon 97202

  Phone: 000-0000

- Resource Center for Child Abuse Prevention
  Regional Research Institute for Human Services
  School of Social Work
  Portland State University
  1912 SW Sixth Avenue, Room 120
  Portland, Oregon 97201

  Phone: 000-0000

NATIONAL RESOURCES

- American Humane Association (AHA)
  American Association for Protecting Children
  9725 E Hampden Avenue
  Denver, Colorado 80231

  Phone:(303) 695-0811

- Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)
  67 Irving Place
  New York, New York 10003

  Phone:(212) 254-7410

- Family Resource Coalition (FRC)
  230 N Michigan Avenue, Suite 1625
  Chicago, Illinois 60601

  Phone:(312) 726-4750

- C. Henry Kempe National Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect
  1205 Oneida Street
  Denver, Colorado 80220

  Phone:(303) 321-3963

- National Assault Prevention Center
  PO Box 02005
  Columbus, Ohio 43202

  Phone:(614) 291-2540

- National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect Clearinghouse
  PO Box 1182
  Washington, DC 20013

  Phone:(301) 251-5157

- National Child Abuse Coalition
  1125 15th Street NW, Suite 300
  Washington, DC 20005

  Phone:(202) 293-7550

- National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPCA)
  332 S Michigan Avenue, Suite 950
  Chicago, Illinois 60604

  Phone:(312) 663-3520

THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS IN SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Linda S. Lumsden

WHAT FACTORS AFFECT RECOGNITION AND REPORTING BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL?

The school is the one social institution outside the family with which nearly all children have consistent, ongoing contact. Therefore, it is particularly well-suited for identifying endangered children, including those who are being sexually maltreated. Today, many schools are striving to become more effective participants in prevention and intervention efforts designed to reduce the complex problem of child abuse.

Teachers are empathetic toward abused children, but fear and lack of knowledge may make them hesitant about reporting abuse (Thomas McIntyre 1990). Although teachers are required by law to report suspected child abuse, most colleges allow teachers to become certified without exposure to child abuse curricula. In one survey, 81 percent of teachers reported receiving no preservice information about abuse and neglect, and 66 percent said they had not been given any inservice education in this area (McIntyre 1987).

Lack of adequate training hinders teachers' ability to detect all types of abuse, but it may especially impair their ability to recognize sexual abuse, since most victims manifest no obvious external signs.

In a study that asked teachers about their knowledge of various forms of abuse, only 4 percent of the polled teachers stated that they were "very aware" of the signs of sexual abuse. Another 17 percent said they would be able to recognize signs that were "very obvious," while 75 percent reported that they would not recognize signs at any point (McIntyre).

Even when sexual abuse is suspected, however, it is not always reported to child protective services. Bonnie Trudell and Mariamne Whatley (1988) note, "The reporting philosophy of the school principal has been found to exert an important influence on teacher reporting [of sexual abuse]. Where a principal encourages it, teachers are more likely to report; where principals are reluctant to report (frequently for reasons related to maintaining good parental relations and school image), teachers report less often."

A teacher's emotional response to the issue of child sexual abuse also can affect his or her tendency to report. Because many people find it difficult to comprehend that anyone would sexually victimize children, there is a tendency to deny that the problem exists.

Some teachers also may be reluctant to report suspected abuse because they are unaware that if they make a report in "good faith," they have immunity from civil or criminal liability. Providing employees with the opportunity to discuss and ask questions about their school's policies and procedures will facilitate both understanding and compliance (Joy Rogers 1988).

This *ERIC Digest* was published by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Eucational Management in 1991.

WHAT ARE SOME POTENTIAL INDICATORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

Several emotional and behavioral difficulties are commonly observed in children who are being sexually abused. Of course, just because a child exhibits some of these, educators must not automatically jump to the conclusion that the child is being sexually abused. Often signs are ambiguous; other stressors in a child's life can produce similar symptoms.

Specific signs that *may* indicate sexual abuse include regressive behaviors such as thumbsucking, enuresis (bed wetting), and nightmares; sleep disturbances; persistent, inappropriate sexual play with self, peers, or toys; knowledge of sexual behavior (often evident in drawings) that is advanced for the child's age; poor peer relationships; overly compliant behavior; acting-out behavior such as delinquency or aggression (often seen in children who attempted to get help but received none); pseudo-mature behavior; school-related difficulties including an inability to concentrate, faltering school performance, reluctance to change clothes for gym class or to participate in physical activities, and arriving at school early and staying late; running away from home; suicidal thoughts or attempts; and sexual promiscuity or avoidance of relationships (Deborah Tharinger and Ellen Vevier 1987).

Other possible indicators of sexual abuse include pain, itching, bleeding, torn or stained clothing; withdrawal (some children may retreat into a fantasy world or appear retarded); drug/alcohol abuse; and indirect allusions to problems at home (for example, a child may tell a teacher "I'm afraid to go home tonight" or "I want to come live with you") (Oregon Health Division 1987).

Abused children sometimes present information in a piecemeal fashion to test an adult's response to what they share. Therefore, it is vital for teachers and other school personnel to be provided with training not only in detecting possible abuse but in responding to intentional and accidental disclosure by children.

WHAT ISSUES RELATE TO ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING SCHOOL EMPLOYEES?

Allegations of sexual misconduct involving school employees and students have been increasing (Martha McCarthy 1989). When William Bridgeland and Edward Duane (1990) interviewed principals in Canada and the U.S., they found that "it is not an accusation of physical abuse that [principals] fear, rather, it is charges of sexual abuse which are the focus of most concern."

Cases of physical or sexual abuse involving school personnel have raised the issue of whether schools are liable for employees' actions. As McEvoy states, "The legal principle of 'respondent superior' suggests that, under certain circumstances, agents who hire and supervise can be liable for the actions of employees. However, it is not clear how this principle applies to situations where staff clearly violate stated policy by their abusive actions."

Rogers suggests that school administrators may be inadvertently exposing staff members to the threat of allegations by asking them to drive a single child somewhere or by allowing a teacher with an out-of-the-way office to work with children individually. Some principals in Bridgeland and Duane's study reported that their staffs are refusing to be put in what they consider "compromising positions."

A joint statement on sexual abuse of children issued by the American Association of School Administrators and the National Association of State Boards of Education (1987) emphasizes that when a school employee is convicted of sexual abuse, states should disseminate information on the conviction to all public and private schools. The statement also encourages schools to participate in the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) Clearinghouse system for reporting revocations and suspensions of teaching certificates among states.

ARE PREVENTION PROGRAMS EFFECTIVE?

Educating children about how to protect themselves from being sexually abused through school-based prevention programs is viewed by some people as another viable tool that should be used in the fight against child sexual abuse.

Although some advocate prevention programs for children, others express reservations about the conceptual assumptions underlying some programs and voice concern about the lack of attention paid to program evaluation. Those who harbor concerns believe that well-intentioned programs may have undesirable effects on the children they are aimed at helping.

"In order to protect children," state Sherryll Kraiser and others (1989), "educators and parents need to know what works. Equally important, they need to know how to accomplish this end without compromising the children's emotional well-being." Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine with certainty whether prevention programs are effective in reducing children's vulnerability to sexual abuse. Children's knowledge and performance in simulated scenarios can be measured, but improvement in these areas following exposure to a prevention program is not necessarily predictive of how children will respond when they find themselves facing a real situation.

Since a majority of abusers are members of the child's family or other trusted adults—not strangers—a myriad of powerful psychological factors have a bearing on actual situations that play no part in simulated scenarios. We must recognize that it is extremely "difficult for a child to translate knowledge into behaviors when the sexual touching is done by a powerful and important person in the child's life" (John Leventhal 1987).

HOW CAN SCHOOLS COLLABORATE WITH SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES?

Child abuse in general and sexual abuse in particular is such a complex problem that no one sector of society can tackle it singlehandedly. Cooperation between school personnel and child protective services workers is vital, but the roles and authority of both organizations must be clearly understood before a collaborative relationship can develop. Designating a liaison person to provide continuity between these two organizations is one way of increasing mutual understanding (Haase and Kempe). Greg McClare (1990) advocates using a consultant or resource person "to be supportive and reassuring to both principals and staff facing a child-abuse crisis."

More schools are participating in community child protection teams, which many view as a "key to effective management of child abuse" (Haase and Kempe). Teams consist of relevant specialists such as educators, social workers, doctors, lawyers, police, and mental health professionals who work together in the areas of coordination, intervention, and supervision of child abuse cases. This type of team effort serves as "a 'risk management tool,' which serves to decrease the chances of error when encountering child abuse, because decision making is shared and second opinions are built into the framework of responding," states McEvoy.

Although schools have a key role to play in the fight against abuse, we should not forget that the problem must be confronted on many levels. Ultimately, the greatest challenge may lie in attempting to alter social attitudes and conditions that foster or tolerate the sexual abuse of children.

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AT • RISK

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IN

C R I S I S

The *At-Risk Youth in Crisis* Handbook Series has been designed to promote inter-agency agreement on procedures for schools to follow in managing crisis situations with at-risk students. *Volume 1: Introduction and Resources* explains the rationale for the Handbook, tells how it was developed, and guides school districts in adapting the Handbook to meet their own needs. Volume 1 also provides resources on the general subject of collaboration between schools and social service agencies.

Subsequent volumes deal with specific crisis issues: suicide, child abuse, substance abuse, teen parents, school attendance, and so forth. Each volume suggests guidelines for school staff to follow as they respond to immediate crisis situations. In addition, each volume presents long-term prevention strategies, staff and student training programs, policy development guidelines, and other practical materials.

A theme running through all these volumes is the need for interagency cooperation. Schools do play a critical role in preventing and intervening in crisis situations. However, they can neither assume total responsibility for resolving crises, nor abdicate responsibility on grounds that such problems are outside the realm of the educational focus of the school.

A comprehensive, integrated approach, in which schools, parents, and community agencies cooperate and collaborate, is absolutely essential to prevent these problems from occurring and to intervene at the earliest possible moment when they do occur.

This Handbook serves as a model for both content (substantive guidelines for responding to particular crisis situations) and process (procedures for entering into productive collaborative relationships between schools and social service agencies).

By discussing the crisis-response guidelines with the community social service systems, school district personnel can clarify and delineate their own responsibility from community responsibility. Ultimately, the aim of the Handbook is to promote an arena in which the most appropriate service delivery can occur in the school and the community.

Linn-Benton Education Service District
and
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